

**CALIFORNIA RESEARCH BUREAU
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
Health Care Supplement**

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Introduction to Studies in the News

Studies in the News is a current compilation of items significant to the Legislature and Governor's Office. It is created weekly by the State Library's [California](#)

[Research Bureau](#) to supplement the public policy debate in California. To help share the latest information with state policymakers, these reading lists are now being made accessible through the State Library's website. This week's list of current articles in various public policy areas is presented below. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at www.library.ca.gov/sitn

- When available, the URL for the full text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact the State Information & Reference Center (916-654-0206; cslsirc@library.ca.gov) with the SITN issue number and the item number [S#].
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

HEALTH

AIR POLLUTION

"Ambient Particulate Matter Accelerates Coagulation Via an IL-6-Dependent Pathway" By Gökhan M. Mutlu and others. IN: Journal of Clinical Investigation, vol. 117, no. 10 (October 2007) pp. 2952-2961.

Full text at: <http://www.jci.org/cgi/reprint/117/10/2952>

["The study identifies how tiny pieces of soot -- called particulate matter air pollution -- kill people at risk and tells how they can protect themselves from these pollution-related strokes and heart attacks. Researchers have discovered that this microscopic air pollution -- smaller than 10 microns or less than one-tenth of the diameter of a human hair -- spurs hyperclotting of the blood. The study found that lungs inflamed by the pollution secrete a substance, interleukin-6, which causes an increased tendency for blood to coagulate or clot. This raises the risk of a fatal heart attack or stroke in people with cardiovascular disease such as coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure or a history of stroke." Science Daily (September 26, 2007) 1.]

[Request #S08-8-1305]

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ALCOHOL & DRUG USE

Opinion of Edmund G. Brown, Attorney General, and Gregory L. Gonot, Deputy Attorney General. By the California Attorney General. No. 07-601. (The Attorney General, Sacramento, California) December 18, 2007. 9 p.

Full text at: http://ag.ca.gov/cms_attachments/opinions/pdfs/o507_07-601.pdf

["There are at least 76 [sober-living homes] in Newport Beach, according to a city survey, a number that has rocked sensibilities in a town where a premium is put on fun, sun and the good life. ... The state attorney general's office said in an opinion that neither state nor local government has the authority to limit substance-abuse treatment facilities, even if the community has more than enough to meet the local need.... The debate here is being watched closely by communities up and down the coast as a test of how far local governments can go in reining in a largely unregulated cottage industry." Los Angeles Times (January 22, 2008) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-1672]

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BIOTECHNOLOGY

“Induction of Pluripotent Stem Cells from Adult Human Fibroblasts by Defined Factors.” By Kazutoshi Takahashi and others. IN: Cell, vol. 131, no. 5 (November 30, 2007) pp. 1-12.

Full text at: <http://images.cell.com/images/Edimages/Cell/IEPs/3661.pdf>

["Researchers reported that they had reprogrammed mature human cells to behave almost exactly like embryonic stem cells, a biological breakthrough that instantly recasts the field's ethical, scientific and economic landscape. By activating a handful of dormant genes, the researchers were able to coax the cells back in time to a point in embryonic development before they had committed to becoming a particular type of tissue. For scientists, the method offers a straightforward alternative to the tricky and still unsuccessful cloning process in which a patient's DNA is inserted into a human egg to create a cloned embryo whose stem cells theoretically could be harvested." Los Angeles Times (November 21, 2007) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-1300]

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CHILDREN

National Evaluation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program: A Decade of Expanding Coverage and Improving Access. By Margo Rosenbach and others, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (Mathematica, Cambridge, Massachusetts) September 2007.

["Reauthorization of SCHIP offers many opportunities to cover even more low-income children who would otherwise be uninsured and to enhance their access to health care through the SCHIP program. The lessons of the past decade can inform the SCHIP reauthorization process to strengthen the program even further."]
[Request #S08-8-1156]

Report. 246 p.

<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/SCHIPdecade.pdf>

Issue Brief. 5 p.

<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/SCHIPdecadeissbr.pdf>

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CHILDREN

Worsening Economic Conditions Will Increase Demand for the State Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid. By the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress. (The Committee, Washington, DC) January 18, 2008. 8 p.

Full text at:

<http://www.jec.senate.gov/Documents/Reports/01.18.08%20CHIP%20Medicare%20Report.pdf>

[Worsening economic conditions will likely create substantial increases in demand for enrollment in states' Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program over the next few years, even apart from the normal growth trend in public coverage. If employment growth falls to the levels seen following the 2001 recession, then demand for these programs will grow as the economy slows."]
[Request #S08-8-1758]

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CHILDREN

Can a Child Health Insurance Tax Credit Serve as an Effective Substitute for SCHIP Expansion? By Linda J. Blumberg and Genevieve M. Kenney, The Urban Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) October 2007. 6 p.

Full text at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411560_schip_substitute.pdf

["The coverage of children with incomes above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) has become a contentious issue. Proposals have surfaced that would subsidize the purchase of health insurance for children between 200 and 300 percent of the FPL using tax credits and the private insurance market, as an alternative to allowing states to continue enrolling these children in SCHIP coverage. This analysis compares the family financial burdens of covering children under SCHIP and under a refundable tax credit providing a \$1400 per child subsidy."]

[Request #S08-8-1057]

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EXERCISE

2006-07 California Physical Fitness Report: Summary of Results. By the California Department of Education. (The Department, Sacramento, California) December 2007. 1 p.

Full text at:

<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/PhysFitness/PFTTestSt2007.asp?cYear=2006-07&cChoice=PFTTest1&RptNumber=0>

["California public school students are slightly trimmer and more fit than they were a year ago, but many are still unable to meet the state's basic level of fitness. About 60% of students in grades 5, 7 and 9 statewide passed an aerobic fitness test, up roughly 3% from last year. Nearly a third of the students passed all of the six criteria that the state uses to determine fitness.... This year's scores show a 1.5% increase in 5th grade students' scores, a 1.3% increase in 7th grade students' scores, and a 2.7% gain in 9th grade students' scores compared to last year's results." Los Angeles Times (December 6, 2007) 1.]

[Request #S08-8-1501]

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HEALTH CARE

Say What? Understanding Health Information. By Joan Lichterman and others, Health Research for Action, University of California, Berkeley. (Health Research for Action, Berkeley, California) 2007. 8 p.

Full text at:

http://www.healthresearchforaction.org/downloads/pub_perspectives3.pdf

["Many native English-speakers have limited literacy and numeracy skills. Many others have limited proficiency in the English language. And others, including many seniors, have vision, hearing, or cognitive limitations. Differences in cultural experiences can be an additional challenge to communication.... Why do these issues matter? Health information can save lives -- if it is communicated effectively. And health communication must improve if we as a society are to reduce health disparities and improve population health. The need to improve health communication has led to the new field of study called 'health literacy.' Health literacy is commonly defined as the ability to understand and act on health information."] [Request #S08-8-1288]

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HEALTH CARE REFORM

Health Care Reform Now!: A Prescription for Change. By George Halvorson. (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California) 2007. 361 p.

["The author, offers an approach to health care reform and universal coverage that can work for all stakeholders. He outlines a game plan for a truly world-class health care system that ... will deliver health care with improved quality, better access, provider accountability, performance transparency, consumer choice, and individual empowerment.... George Halvorson has led two nonprofit health plans (Health Partners in Minnesota and Kaiser Foundation Health Plan in California)." Business Week (October 21, 2007) 1.] NOTE: Health Care Reform Now ... is available for checkout. [Request #S08-8-1377]

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HEALTH INSURANCE

Why Health Insurance Is Important. By Randall R. Bovbjerg and Jack Hadley, The Urban Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) November 2007. 3 p.

Full text at:

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411569_importance_of_insurance.pdf

["Having health insurance is important for several reasons. Uninsured people receive less medical care and less timely care, they have worse health outcomes, and lack of insurance is a fiscal burden for them and their families. Moreover, the benefits of expanding coverage outweigh the costs for added services. Safety-net care from hospitals and clinics improves access to care but does not fully substitute for health insurance. These findings are supported by much research, although some cautions are appropriate in using these results."]

[Request #S08-8-1309]

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HEALTH INSURANCE

A Roadmap to Health Insurance for All: Principles for Reform. By Sara R. Collins and others, The Commonwealth Fund. (The Fund, New York, New York) October 2007.

["This report explores different options and how each may not only increase coverage for the uninsured, but also improve quality and efficiency and gain control over spiraling health care costs. Proposals are grouped into three approaches: tax incentives and the individual insurance market; mixed private–public group insurance with shared responsibility for financing; and public insurance. The Commission believes the most pragmatic approach to coverage for all is mixed private–public group insurance that builds on the best features of our current system with shared responsibility for financing from individuals, employers, and government that minimizes dislocation for the millions of Americans who currently have good coverage."]

[Request #S08-8-1257]

Report. 68 p.

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/Collins_roadmaphtinsforall_1066.pdf?section=4039

Executive Summary. Various pagings

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=553840

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HEALTH INSURANCE

Increasing Health Insurance Coverage of Workers in Small Firms: Challenges and Strategies: Testimony before the U.S. Senate Finance Committee . By Linda J. Blumberg, The Urban Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) October 25, 2007. 18 p.

Full text at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/901126_small_firm_coverage.pdf

["Small employers face substantial disadvantages relative to large employers when providing health insurance to their workers. These problems can largely be summarized as higher administrative costs of insurance, limited ability to spread health care risk, and a workforce with lower wages. But the primary barrier to coverage for workers in small firms is being low-income; workers in small firms are more than twice as likely as those in large firms to have family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Significant inroads into reducing the uninsured in this population will require income-related subsidization of insurance coverage"]
[Request #S08-8-1157]

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HOSPITAL COSTS

Hospital Pricing and the Uninsured: Do the Uninsured Pay Higher Prices? By Glenn A. Melnick and Katya Fonkych. IN: Health Affairs, vol. 27, no. 2 (January/February 2008) pp. w116–w122.

Full text at: <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/hlthaff.27.2.w116v1>

["Despite efforts by hospitals to curb aggressive collections practices, a study found the uninsured in California still pay more on average for services than government payers such as Medicare. Uninsured people are typically billed the highest prices for hospital care -- the so-called retail rate -- because government and commercial payers negotiate steep discounts.... In 2004 and 2005, California hospitals voluntarily agreed to offer patients with low to moderate incomes managed-care-style rates. Hospital officials criticized the study for failing to reflect recent changes the industry has implemented to provide some relief for the uninsured." San Francisco Chronicle (February 5, 2008) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-1762]

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IMMIGRATION & IMMIGRANTS

"Immigrants and Health Care: Sources of Vulnerability." By K. P. Derose and others. IN: Health Affairs, vol. 26, no. 5 (October 2007) pp. 1258-1268.

Full text at: <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/26/5/1258>

["Although most immigrants are relatively healthy and often experience better outcomes, including lower mortality, than their U.S.-born counterparts, their health often deteriorates over time in the United States. Health policies targeted specifically to immigrants ... include expanded health-insurance coverage through public-and private-sector providers; broader implementation of cultural and linguistic standards for health care providers; and support of the medical safety net in communities that experience high influxes of immigrants."]

[Request #S08-8-1802]

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INFECTIOUS DISEASE

"Cost-Effectiveness of Alternative Strategies for Tuberculosis Screening Before Kindergarten Entry." By Valerie J. Flaherman, University of California, San Francisco, and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 120, no. 1 (July 2007) pp. 90-99.

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/120/1/90>

["Scrapping so-called universal TB testing in favor of a more targeted approach would save about \$1.3 million a year. The researchers recommend screening all children with a questionnaire and giving a skin test only to high-risk kids, including foreign born children, those who have recently traveled abroad, or those with TB-infected relatives." San Jose Mercury News (July 2, 2007) 1.]

[Request #S08-8-1173]

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MANAGED HEALTH CARE

Healthcare Quality Report Card: HMO Ratings. By Office of the Patient Advocate. (The Office, Sacramento, California) October 2007. Various pagings.

Full text at: http://www.opa.ca.gov/report_card/hmorating.aspx

[“Many Californians enrolled in healthcare plans are receiving inadequate preventive care. The eight largest plans in the state fail to ensure that their 12 million members are sufficiently tested and treated to prevent and detect major diseases and reduce unnecessary expenses. The report compared how often the plans, along with about 200 physician groups, met 31 clinical quality standards, such as immunizing infants and screening adults for cancer, in 2006. Each health plan's individual rating was determined by comparing its performance on the 31 care standards with national averages. The overall clinical quality rating was expressed on a scale of one to four stars. No health plan received four stars, or an ‘excellent’ rating.” Los Angeles Times (October 19, 2007) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-1024]

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MENTAL HEALTH

School Mental Health: Role of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Factors Affecting Service Provision. By the Government Accountability Office. GAO-08-19R. (The Office, Washington, DC) October 5, 2007. 34 p.

Full text at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0819r.pdf>

["At the federal level, the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has a stated mission of building resilience and facilitating recovery for people -- including children at risk for mental health problems.... Site officials noted that difficulties securing and sustaining both funding and mental health service provider staff have affected the ability to implement school mental health services."]
[Request #S08-8-1158]

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MENTAL HEALTH

Administration of Mental Health Services by Medicaid Agencies. By James Verdier, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and others. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Washington, DC) 2007. 96 p.

Full text at: <http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA07-4301/SMA07-4301.pdf>

["State Medicaid agencies are playing an increasingly important role in the funding and administration of state mental health services. Little is known about how state Medicaid agencies are exercising their growing responsibilities for mental health services. Accordingly, the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration commissioned a telephone survey of state Medicaid agencies aimed at learning more about how these agencies administer Medicaid-funded mental health services.... The results of the survey are summarized in this report."]
[Request #S08-8-1391]

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PHYSICIANS

2007 San Diego County Physician Workforce and Compensation Survey. By Tom Gehring, San Diego County Medical Society. (The Society, San Diego, California) February 2008. 10 p.

Full text at: <http://www.sdcms.org/atf/cf/%7B2246CA5C-0E62-45D2-B736-9A9D35AFFAF9%7D/SDP200802work&comp.pdf>

["It may be getting tougher to find a doctor when you need one. Even if you're successful, you may have to wait longer to get an appointment -- especially if Medicare, Medi-Cal or the County Medical Services program is paying the bill.... The report shows a rising percentage of doctors who no longer accept Medicare, Medi-Cal and County Medical Services payments, which continue to be low in this region. In particular, Medicare officials use an outdated formula that classifies San Diego County as rural, incorrectly assuming that it enjoys cheaper costs of living than 'urban' counties such as San Francisco and Los Angeles.... The financial gap has helped create an apparent shortage of physicians in various specialties, including those in primary care." San Diego Union-Tribune (January 29, 2008) B1.]
[Request #S08-8-1761]

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Community Health Workers. By Melilnda Hansen and Laura Tobler, National Conference of State Legislatures. NCSL Legisbrief. (The Conference, Denver, Colorado) February 2008. 2 p.

["Community health worker programs have the potential not only to reduce health disparities, but also to save money. Savings can occur through fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits; healthier behaviors and better management of chronic diseases; and improved prenatal care that leads to successful pregnancies and births.... Some states are now considering use of Medicaid funds to sustain community health programs."]

[Request #S08-8-1800]

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RESEARCH

Federalism by Necessity: State and Private Support for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research. By James W. Fossett, Rockefeller Institute of Government. (The Institute, Albany, New York) August 9, 2007. 13 p.

Full text at: <http://www.rockinst.org/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=12064>

["States and private donors now spend significantly more money than the federal government to support hESC research, a situation that seems likely to persist.... These efforts have both increased the amount of money devoted to hESC research and established infrastructure -- laboratory space, training programs, and the like -- that is not subject to federal spending restrictions. This paper outlines the current federal regulatory and funding situation, inventories state and private funding for stem cell research, and evaluates the factors likely to shape future stem cell funding."]

[Request #S08-8-1306]

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SMOKING

An Ordinance of the City of Belmont Regulating Secondhand Smoke and Amending the Belmont Municipal Code. By the City of Belmont City Council (The City, Belmont, California) September 25, 2007. 29 p.

Full text at: <http://www.belmont.gov/Upload/Document/D240003492/5A-CC-09252007.pdf>

[“Under the city's new smoking ban, apartment residents whose secondhand smoke invades their neighbors' units will be subject to fines of as much as \$1,000. The measure bans smoking in multiunit dwellings as well as in parks, outdoor restaurants and other public places. The apartment provision takes effect around New Year's 2009.... The city says the tenant smoking ban will be enforced only if neighbors complain. It's believed to be the first such law in the country.” San Francisco Chronicle (October 11, 2007) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-927]

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SMOKING

"The Effect of Working for Pay on Adolescent Tobacco Use." By R. Ramchand and others. IN: American Journal of Public Health, vol. 97, no. 11 (November 2007) pp. 2056-2062.

Full text at: <http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/97/11/2056>

["The study found that those who worked for more than 10 hours a week tended to start smoking at younger ages than those who did not work or worked less than 10 hours a week.... Among teens who had not yet used tobacco, those who started to work between grades 10 and 11 were at least three times more likely to begin smoking than teens who did not begin to work in this period.... Policymakers should focus on the workplace as a promising venue for smoking prevention programs and antismoking policies."]
[Request #S08-8-1801]

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TOXICOLOGY

Baby Care Products: Possible Sources of Infant Phthalate Exposure. By Sheela Sathyanarayana and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 21, no. 2 (February 2008) pp. e260-e268.

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/121/2/e260.pdf>

["Infants and toddlers exposed to baby lotions, shampoos and powders carry high concentrations of hormone-altering chemicals in their bodies that might have reproductive effects, according to a new scientific study of babies born in Los Angeles and two other U.S. cities.... Manufacturers do not list phthalates as ingredients on labels, so it is unknown which products contain them. The researchers stressed that the potential effects on babies were uncertain. But previous animal and human research suggests that early exposure to some phthalates could reduce testosterone and alter reproductive organs, particularly in males." Los Angeles Times (February 4, 2008) 1.]
[Request #S08-8-1736]

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UNINSURED

Snapshot: California's Uninsured 2007. By the California HealthCare Foundation. (The Foundation, Oakland, California) November 2007. 19 p.

Full text at: <http://www.chcf.org/documents/insurance/SnapshotUninsured07.pdf>

["The number of uninsured Californians under age 65 continues to rise as employer-sponsored health insurance declines. Some who lose insurance at their workplace are buying individual policies; others become eligible for coverage through public programs like Medi-Cal. But more than 20% of Californians remain uninsured. The problem, though national, is more prominent in California, which has a lower percentage of individuals with employer-sponsored coverage and a higher proportion of uninsured. And because of California's large population, the number of people without insurance -- 6.6 million -- is the highest of any state."]
[Request #S08-8-1307]

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VACCINES

Influenza Vaccine: Issues Related to Production, Distribution, and Public Health Messages. By the U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-08-27. (The Office, Washington, DC) October 2007. 64 p.

Full text at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0827.pdf>

["GAO examined: 1) factors that affect the quantity of vaccine produced and when it reaches providers, 2) issues related to making vaccine available to high-risk and other target groups, and 3) public health messages produced and disseminated by CDC and others to promote vaccination."]
[Request #S08-8-1311]

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